

**Abstract 427**

**TITLE:** Positive Sexual Development: An HIV Prevention Approach for Confined Male Adolescents in a Correctional Facility

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**ISSUE:** Studies have shown that adolescents are more likely to engage in high-risk behaviors such as unprotected sex, sex with multiple partners, and intravenous drugs when they participate in other problem behaviors such as anti-social behavior, cigarette smoking, alcohol use, and illegal drug use. Juveniles in confinement facilities exhibit one and usually more of these behaviors. Because confined adolescents have engaged HIV risk behaviors, juvenile facilities are prime settings for intensive HIV/STD education. Effective HIV prevention requires addressing the complex circumstances in which high-risk behaviors occur and persist. The Positive Sexual Development curriculum aims to provide confined male adolescents with knowledge, skills and new behavioral options related to sexual and personal decisions.

**SETTING:** The HIV Prevention program (Positive Sexual Development) takes place at Bloomington Juvenile Correctional Facility (BJCF) in Bloomington, IN. The intended audience is confined male adolescents between the ages of 12-18 and staff of BJCF.

**PROJECT:** Implementation of Positive Sexual Development is a two-phase process. In the first phase all staff at BJCF are trained in HIV/STD prevention, sexuality issues, and how to address these critical issues with youth. The second phase involves the provision of comprehensive education and risk-reduction education strategies through an 8-week series of small interactive groups that include activities such as role playing, games, audio-visuals, service projects and HIV-positive guest speakers.

**RESULTS:** Over 50 confined male adolescents have been through the PSD program since 6/98 and over 40 BJCF staff have been trained in HIV/STD prevention and sexuality issues. Qualitative evaluations indicate that the students gained more knowledge about HIV/AIDS and more skills for protecting themselves than they had pre-treatment. As a result, the correctional facility has agreed to expand the Positive Sexual Development curriculum to include virtually every student who enters the facility. The project has just completed the fourth group of the 1998 project year and is in the process of evaluating the results of the pre- and post-tests given to both treatment and control groups. Preliminary data will be available at the conference.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** The inclusion of the entire staff in the trainings on HIV/AIDS prevention and sexuality issues was critical in making this project a success. As a result of being included in the training, staff were more accommodating with the logistical issues involved in doing this program in the facility and their increased awareness on this topic through the staff training allowed for follow-up in the facility when an HIV facilitator was not present. Also, the small, closed group setting where the facilitators could bond with the students was critical in getting students to open up about their values, beliefs, and experiences regarding sexual issues. This allowed the facilitators more opportunity for comprehensive intervention. Finally, as a result of this project, there has been an overall increase in the number of students at the BJCF requesting HIV testing.

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